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Co-ops Host the 2007 EAT LOCAL Challenge

Four Weeks of Locally-Grown Heaven...

By now, many of us have read that the average food item in our shopping carts traveled 1,300 miles to get to local stores. What to do? Our sales at the Wedge tell us that you are already embracing the concept of eating locally in a big way. So we decided to challenge all of us to try to increase our local consumption with the 2007 Twin City Co-op Eat Local Challenge from August 15 through September 15.

The goal of the challenge is to base 80 percent of your diet (four out of five items or ingredients) on food produced within the five-state* area. This includes fruit, vegetables, meat, poultry, fish, eggs, dairy products, baked goods and grocery items. Of course, if you choose a smaller area, that's great — and do let us know how that works out! You can follow the Eat Local Challenge experience of a number of Wedge community luminaries on www.wedge.coop and find more information at www.twincitiesfood.coop — the web equivalent of Mix.

Sign up on the poster in the store if you wish to make your participation a matter of public record. To make it as easy as possible to identify local products, we are feverishly working on signs that identify local items in each aisle. Produce, dairy, meat and cheese are heavy on local products, but don't overlook locally produced items in the grocery aisles. Yes, you can still eat tortilla chips during the Challenge (Whole Grain Milling) dipped in Salsa Lisa or salsa made at the Wedge Deli. Our What's For Supper? recipes by local chef and teacher Jennette Turner feature the freshest locally-grown ingredients.

Our challenge is based on the honor system and is purely personal. Should you choose to accept, you'll find sample menus and plenty of tools to help ensure your success at your local co-op.

**Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa and the Dakotas.*

EAT LOCAL CHALLENGE

From August 15 to September 15, brave Wedge shoppers will endure the Eat Local Challenge — and two of them have agreed to make their efforts public. Sarah Swan and Fred Grieco will blog their culinary experiences during the Challenge month — the highs, the lows, the recipes, and outstanding local food discoveries. Come to our website, www.wedge.coop, starting August 15, and cheer them on.

Plus, we'll have some special guests providing wisdom and inspiration for our all our Eat Local Challengers, including:

- Brenda Langton and local chef Nick Schneider (Café Brenda) and local chef Chris Bundy (Spoonriver)
- Michelle Heuser, local editor of Edible Twin Cities
- Jon Rodine, Red House Records and local crooner
- Lyda Morehouse, local author
- Beth Dooley, local author and Star Tribune columnist
- David Huckfelt, local band The Pines
- Megan O'Hara, local spouse of Minneapolis Mayor R. T. Rybak

And more surprises as the Challenge heats up!





AT THE WEDGE

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If you DON'T want to receive the Wedge Newsletter in the Mail, go to www.wedge.coop and follow the links to "Membership: Changing Your Preference."

MOVING?

Go to www.wedge.coop and click on Membership. Or bring or mail the information to the Wedge. You may also call 612-871-3993 and ask for voicemail box 420 and leave the information there anytime. Be sure to include your ZIP code and member number in all communications.

Mid-day at Pastureland

One of the joys of farm life is that we set our own schedule. After morning chores are done and breakfast dishes are cleaned up, we head out to see what needs attention. There might be calves to check on, fence to move or snow to plow. This morning, there is machinery to fix and hay to cut. Later, we'll decide the grazing rotation for the rest of the month.

The milk truck comes mid-morning, right on schedule. We wave to the driver as we top the hill on our way out to the furthest pasture to see if the grass is ready to cut for hay. Some days the driver brings the kids chocolate milk — a treat, since the cows never seem to give chocolate milk!

Warm weather the past few days and a half inch of rain overnight kick-started the grass. It is so green it almost glows in the morning

light, the dew now drying in the sun. It's a nice dense stand. More for the cows to graze, and great for erosion control.

The sun hangs above us as we head to the house for dinner. After we eat, we get up to go back out. A yawn reminds me we've been up since 4:30 a.m. These summer days are long, but very productive. We've gotten started cutting 60 acres of prime pasture for winter hay. If the weather holds as predicted, dry and windy for the next few days, we will have prime feed for the cows in winter.

The kids and dog follow us out after their naps. Some days we think they'd play in the pasture all day if we didn't bring them in for baths and meals once in awhile. They play in the gopher holes and splash in the water tank, and if we're lucky, they'll sing a song or two. They know we'll soon get ready to bring the cows home for evening milking.



FINANCIAL REPORT

by Elka Malkis

Our store's fiscal year ended on June 30, 2007, so I won't have the 4th quarter's numbers in until early August (missing this issue's early July copy deadline). We have an outside CPA do a full audit every year, and the audited statements for the fiscal year will be finished in late September.

I do have a few preliminary numbers I'd like to share with you. Sales at the store for this fiscal year were just over \$27,700,000. This is a small increase over the previous year's sales of \$27,347,000. The average amount spent on each transaction was \$30.27; last year it was \$29.35. The average number of customers per day during the year was 2,556; last year it

was 2,562. If any of you know those 6 people who shopped here last year but not this year, please tell them we miss them, and that there's room in the parking lot on Wednesdays and Thursdays.

At the Warehouse, we had sales of over \$9,500,000. Our new online store, open for business this past October, had sales of \$16,000.

We ended the year within shouting distance of 13,000 members. While I expect our Net Income to be a little lower than last year, since our overall expenses were up, I am confident that we can look forward to another healthy Patronage Refund this autumn.

Local Farmers & Chefs Featured at State Fair Aug. 28 During 5th Annual Minnesota Cooks Event

St. Paul— Enthusiasm and passion around local Minnesota foods continues to mushroom, and the Minnesota Cooks program at the Minnesota State Fair is pleased to take part once again in furthering this excitement and commitment to our local farmers. It's the 5-year anniversary of this engaging event, where some of Minnesota's premier chefs demonstrate how they use farm fresh and locally- and sustainably-grown ingredients to create award-winning fare for their restaurants.

The Minnesota Cooks program will take place on Tuesday, Aug. 28, 2007 in Carousel Park on the Minnesota State Fairgrounds, just west of the Grandstand Ramp. With seven 45-minute shows taking place from

10:00 am until 5:00 p.m., outstanding chefs from the Twin Cities and throughout Minnesota will demonstrate their talents and interact with emcee and host Andrew Zimmern, local food critic, celebrity, and host of the Travel Channel's Bizarre Foods, who will interview local celebrity tasters and the local farmers who produce the ingredients.

The chefs' fare and presentations will vary in style, but they will have one important thing in common – they believe ardently in local foods. Participating chefs include Tracy Singleton of The Birchwood Café, Alex

Roberts of Restaurant Alma, JD Fratzke of Muffuletta, Scott Pampuch of Corner Table, JP Samuelson of jP American Bistro, Mike Phillips of The Craftsman, Matt Annand of Prairie Bay, and many more.



"The State Fair is the place to show consumers how they are connected to that food," said Minnesota Farmers Union President Doug Peterson. "They will hear farmers explain how the food is grown, and see it prepared in really creative ways."

This event is co-sponsored by Minnesota Farmers Union, Food Alliance Midwest, and Renewing the Countryside.

LOCAL



Gardens of Eagan Farmington, MN

The Wedge Co-op has known Martin and Atina Diffley for several decades. They are one of the longest certified organic operations in the United States, first certified in 1974. As organic vegetable growers, the Diffleys are exemplary. Martin was instrumental in establishing organic standards in Minnesota. He volunteered with the Organic Growers and Buyers Association (MN's first certifying agent) in a variety of roles and was an organic inspector for 4 years. The Diffleys have helped Hmong and other immigrants by providing jobs, helping connect them to equipment to start their own farms and even selling land to help new farmers begin their own farms. They have also inspired and educated many young people on organic vegetable farming through their on-farm intern program, the first in the Midwest.

The formidable **Gardens of Eagan** farm produces a wide range of produce, from salad mix to broccoli to a variety of melons and squash. They sell their produce at their roadside stand, natural food co-ops, the Mill City Farmers Market and natural food stores.

Gardens of Eagan was presented with the Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service (MOSES) Organic Farmer of the Year: An Organic Farmer Practicing Outstanding Land Stewardship Award in 2004.

CONNECTING KIDS *to the land* >

By Virginia Pearson, Teacher, Midwest Food Connection

Ask a few kids where their food comes from. I'll bet most will say the grocery store and not give it any more thought. We live in a time when city dwellers, most just three or four generations removed from rural and farm life, have little awareness of the origins of their food and do not connect the food they eat with the land (co-op shoppers excluded of course). "Connecting with the land" is an abstract concept and certainly not one most city kids make. So, what does a connection with the land mean?

Some farmers, poets and environmental stewards speak of that connection as a deep sense of belonging to the land. It may have been seeded in their core as children or come from their work on the land. As urban folks, we might equate this feeling to belonging to a neighborhood or community. The feeling of belonging can motivate us to nurture, care for and contribute to the well-being of the whole. A connection to the land is the same. It can happen if we dig in and spend time on the land. If you live in the country or on a farm it can happen easily, but city residents have to seek opportunities to make this connection happen. A child's visit to a farm can spark the beginning or plant the seed of connection with the land. I've seen it happen.

Every school year in May, the staff of the Midwest Food Connection take several classes of elementary

school children to visit an organic farm. We introduce sustainable farming methods and soil preservation such as cover crops and composting in our classroom lessons, but there is nothing like seeing these practices first hand. Understanding the miracle of composting is much easier when you can see and touch the rich, dark humus the compost pile produces.

The farm trips are my favorite part of our program. I even enjoy the noisy bus ride with the kids! Two classrooms of third graders from Emerson Spanish Immersion, a Minneapolis public school not far from the Wedge, are my companions on this trip to Al and Jean Peterson's Produce, in Delano, just west of the Twin Cities.



CONNECTING KIDS *to the land*



I imagine sitting with me as the bus finally rolls out of the city, through the suburbs and into the countryside. As we see the first green fields the children's anticipation builds. I hear the kids point out the cool sights they see along the way. "Look, caballos!" a boy yelled. "Horses" whispered his buddy, quietly correcting him. When we pull off the highway and onto the dirt road leading to the farm, the children are more than ready to absorb the many lessons the farm environment has to offer. I love watching the kids pile out of the busses, break free of the line formation and scatter over the field. On this school day these kids trade their books and pencils for soil, water and sunshine in order to learn what goes into the growing of food. We make a connection!

Most kids quickly take to life on the farm. Yes, there are always a few who recoil at their first direct encounters, worried about itchy grass on their legs, a bothersome bug or getting dirty, but the majority of children engage immediately with the first things they see. Even those who hesitate at first, eventually find something to like on the farm. Usually it's the wagons and hay stacks or the barn. It might be a worm wiggling in their palm or learning to whistle with a leaf. It's all good and so exciting! One girl discovered an aromatic plant called pineapple weed, carried it all morning and made everybody take a sniff. It seems the kids even enjoy working on the farm.

During our visit, the busy yet gracious farmers allow us to help with the spring vegetable planting. For city people we do pretty well with a few hours of farm labor. We take turns at a number of tasks and feel pretty good about our contribution. But there's more going on here than meets the eye.

Yes, we have our hands in the soil touching roots. We sprinkle water on seedlings, and carefully pat soil around their tiny stems while we help with the transplanting. We step carefully between the rows of young tomato plants stopping to pound a supporting stake next to each. Later, we sit on the grass to rest a while and eat lunch. Some kids lie back on the grass and watch the clouds. Others gaze out over the fields or listen for the calls of birds. As I said, there's more going on here than meets the eye. You may have guessed. It's the quiet forming of our connection with the land.

All too soon it's time to leave. While we thank Jean and Al for letting us visit during this busy time, the children beg to return in the fall. They want to see the pumpkins we are told will fill the fields where we stand. Seeds in the soil- pumpkins in the fall- that's a basic food connection, wouldn't you agree?

The other day I got a call from one of the Emerson teachers thanking the co-ops and Midwest Food Connection for the farm trip. On the last day of school she had asked the kids to name their favorite experience of the school year. Many agreed it was their visit to the farm! They'd made the connection.

Midwest Food Connection, with funding from the Wedge and other Twin City Co-ops, offers elementary school classes in natural foods and sustainable farming practices in schools throughout the Twin Cities and suburbs. Additional information about our program is available by calling (612) 871-3993 ext. 425 or by email, mfc@wedge.coop.



CARDS AND POSTERS

**Artwork commissioned by the
FRIENDS OF ELOISE BUTLER WILDFLOWER GARDEN**

Minneapolis artist Jennifer Davis was a natural choice for a 100th Anniversary commission by the Friends of Eloise Butler. Fantastic flora and fauna figure prominently in her dreamy multi-media visions. Her enchanting commissioned artwork on notecards and posters produced by the Friends is now available to shoppers at the Wedge. A significant portion of the sale price of the posters and cards goes directly to fund Garden restoration projects.

Jennifer Davis is a graduate of the University of Minnesota Fine Arts department. She is featured consistently at local galleries and throughout the country, including current exhibits at Gallery 360 in Minneapolis, Aidan Savoy Gallery in New York and Youngblood Gallery in Atlanta. You can also see her work in BirdXBird exhibits every first Thursday at the Northrup King Building, 1500 Jackson St. NE in

Minneapolis. A fitting tribute to the oldest public wildflower garden in the nation, 'Sanctuary' evokes the delight and peace treasured by Eloise Butler visitors from the world over.

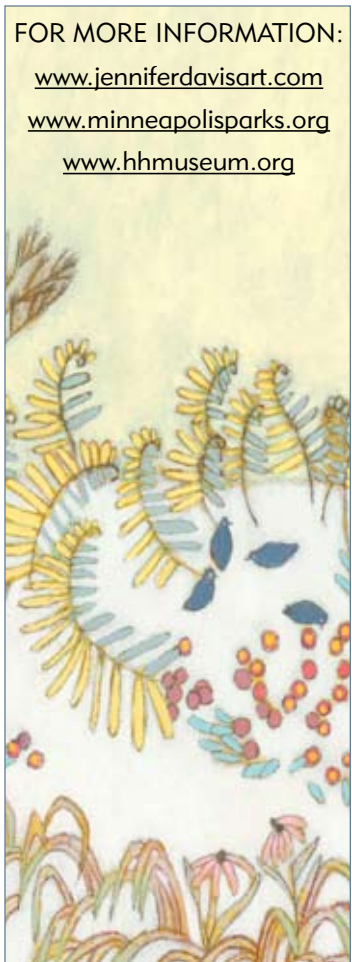
Owned, operated and maintained by the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, the Garden is located in Theodore Wirth Park, south and east of the intersection of Theodore Wirth Boulevard and Glenwood Avenue. The Garden features spectacular seasonal displays of native wildflowers, and woodland, wetland and prairie areas. Upcoming anniversary events include the Eloise Butler Birthday Bash with performances by Heart of the Beast Puppet and Mask Theatre on August 11 and a September 29 planting of 100 trees for 100 years. Eloise Butler: Gardener in the Wild is a current Hennepin History Museum Exhibit running through September 30.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

www.jenniferdavisart.com

www.minneapolisparcs.org

www.hhmuseum.org



WEDGE CO-OP AT THE MINNESOTA STATE FAIR!

For the second year, the Wedge Co-op, in partnership with Renewing the Countryside and Organic Valley, will host the Healthy Local Foods area in the Eco-Experience Building at the Minnesota State Fair. The Wedge will host more than 20 local farmers, shepherds, growers and ranchers as part of our ongoing commitment to local, sustainable food. Meet Martin and Atina Diffley of Gardens of Egan, Harry and Jackie Hoch of Hoch Orchards, and Chris and Kim Blanchard of Rock Spring Farm. We will have different local producers every day of the fair, plus some fun cooking demonstrations featuring Natural Food Educator Jennette Turner and Uli Koester, from Midwest Food Connection.

The Eco-Experience Building is located next to the Machinery Hill on the fair grounds and is open every day of the State Fair from 9-9. The State Fair starts Thursday, August 23 and runs through Labor Day, September 3.



ALL PHOTOS BY GREG THOMPSON



SEE YOU THERE!

Equal Exchange's New Fund Raising Program: *Cultivating Global Citizens*

Equal Exchange, known for fairly traded coffee, tea and chocolate, is launching a new fundraising and education program for kids. The Equal Exchange Fair Trade Fundraising Program connects children with the farmers who grow their foods, and brings the values and lessons of fair trade into the classroom.

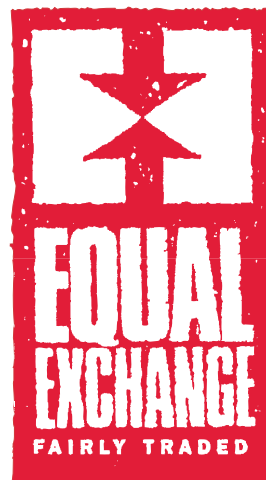
How does the Equal Exchange Fair Trade Fundraiser work? An alternative to conventional fundraisers, Fair Trade fundraising gives children both the profits they need to support their school and the chance to support the farmers whose products they are selling. Groups sell certified fair trade and organic foods, such as delicious chocolate, coffee, tea, pecans and dried cranberries, grown by small-scale farmers around the world and earn 40% profits.

After years of trading with small-scale farmers from other countries, Equal Exchange is excited to begin trading with small-scale U.S. farmers this year under the

Fair Trade principles. The new roasted pecans from Georgia and organic dried cranberries from Massachusetts are now available for school fundraisers.

Teaching tools for the classroom will be available this fall, designed to bring to life the benefits of Fair Trade, including micro-loans for women in Guatemala starting indigenous weaving cooperatives, safe drinking water in Dominican Republic and new elementary schools in El Salvador. With Equal Exchange's Fair Trade Fundraising Program, children experience how our daily habits of shopping and eating can make the world a better place.

A pioneer in the Fair Trade movement, Equal Exchange was founded 21 years ago on a mission to build an alternative global



food system: one based on respect, fairness to farmers and engaged consumers. Sharing this vision with our food co-op partners, Equal Exchange is excited to support the growing number of parents and teachers concerned about how and where their food is grown with the Fair Trade Fundraising Program.

100% of Equal Exchange products are fairly traded, benefiting over 40 small farmer cooperatives in 19 countries around the world. In

keeping with its mission, Equal Exchange is a worker cooperative, owned and democratically controlled by its employees.

Contact Kelsie Evans at:
fundraising@equalexchange.coop
or call (774) 776-7371.

Food Becomes You

WINE, BEER, FOOD, FRIENDS AND HEALTH

by Wendy Gordon

I recently visited a friend I hadn't seen in a long time, who proudly showed me his wine cellar: 1500 bottles of carefully cataloged red wines. A couple years before, a blood test revealed that my friend had a high cholesterol level, for which his doctor had given him a choice. Either he could go on a strict diet,

or he could start drinking red wine.

To be sure, my friend is a bit obsessive (his new wine cellar complements his alphabetized music collection whose shelves fill the walls of another room), but drinking red wine sure sounds like a lot more fun than a "strict diet." Since my friend commenced his new drinking regimen, admittedly complemented by regular exercise and sensible eating habits, his cholesterol levels have dropped to normal.

Evidence supporting the positive effects of "moderate drinking" keep rolling in. The most dramatic results point to alcohol's role in reducing cardiovascular disease, especially the risk of heart attack or stroke.

Other health benefits

include lower risk of Alzheimer's disease, colds, diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis, osteoporosis, kidney stones and ulcers. Studies in as wide ranging parts of the world as the U.S., China and Britain point to increased longevity among moderate drinkers. Studies show improved brain and muscle function in moderate drinkers. One of the most compelling studies was a study of twins.

The twins who drank one to two drinks per day scored higher on intelligence tests than those who did not drink. Many long-term epidemiological studies are muddled by the peculiar fact that moderate drinkers start out healthier than abstainers, with lower rates of obesity and degenerative illness.

When assessing the benefits of alcoholic beverages, it's important to distinguish between alcohol, the chemical compound, and the other constituents of alcoholic beverages, in particular wine and beer. The chemical compound alcohol decreases blood fibrinogen levels, lowering the risk of blood clotting and stroke. It also lowers inflammatory markers that play (still unclear) roles in preventing the genesis of heart disease, cancer and the other ailments noted above. By an as yet unknown mechanism, alcohol seems to raise levels of "good" HDL cholesterol. Alcohol acts as a potent natural antibiotic and antiviral. So even a shot of Everclear isn't without health benefits.

However, the greatest value by far comes from red wine, that staple of Mediterranean cultures. Red wine contains polyphenols, antioxidants found in the skin and seeds of grapes (skins are removed in making white wines, hence a lower polyphenol content). Alcohol extracts these polyphenols, which include catechin, epicatechin, gallic acid and resveratrol. While all antioxidants protect against oxidative cell damage, these compounds appear to be even more potent than the vitamins C and E. Catechins inhibit the growth of cancer cells and Resveratrol, a polyphenol produced as part of a plant's immune system, seems to reduce tumor growth by many measures (initiation, promotion and progression). Polyphenols also protect against early cellular changes linked to the genesis of atherosclerotic disease.

Polyphenols are not only found fresh grapes, but other foods such as broccoli, spinach, blueberries, raspberries, alliums (the onion/garlic family), tea and chocolate. This begs the question: why not just make dietary changes and forget about the alcohol? The fact is that the chemical compound alcohol and the wine's antioxidants work in concert, more powerful together than apart. An interesting

aside is a study, reported in the *Journal of Science of Food and Agriculture*, that showed how storing fruit (particularly strawberries and blueberries) in alcohol helps preserve their nutrient content. Bring on the strawberry daiquiris!

Moderate beer drinking also seems a healthy habit. Like other alcoholic beverages, it is linked to increased longevity for reasons not yet fully elucidated. Keep in mind that beer has been brewed almost as long as people have been cultivating crops, and is made from essentially healthy ingredients: hops, brewer's yeast, barley and malt. Beer is a good source of folate, niacin, magnesium and potassium. The folate in beer may lower blood homocysteine levels (linked to cardiovascular disease), LDL, and triglycerides. One beer a day has been shown to lower the risk of blood clots and improve mental health and bone density in women.

Dietary guidelines for Americans recommend no more than one drink per day for women and no more than two for men, but many studies allow for a higher rate of "moderate" consumption, up to four drinks per day. Generally speaking, moderate drinking means one to three drinks per day, depending on body size, sex (men can drink more than women) and individual alcohol tolerance. A "drink" is defined as five ounces of wine, 12 ounces of beer or 1.5 ounces of hard liquor. Drinking must be spaced out regularly. Binge drinking overwhelms the body's capacity to metabolize alcohol and is just as dangerous as chronic abuse.

A common definition of "heavy drinking" is 21 drinks a week for women (3 a day) and 35 for men (5 a day). Excessive drinking, as everyone knows, has many negative health consequences. Alcohol abuse leads to liver and pancreatic damage, and an increased risk of cancer in those organs. Many alcoholics eat poorly, a condition exacerbated by metabolic affects of alcohol such as interference with fat absorption and protein synthesis. Thiamine deficiencies, common in alcoholics, cause brain damage. Alcohol, especially when accompanied by poor eating habits, causes birth defects including fetal alcohol syndrome.

(Cont'd on page 11)

COOKING *with Wine*

Once, while eating with my family in a rural Oregon café, the waitress recommended an exotic dish: coq au vin. When we didn't leap to order it, she came back a few minutes later and whispered in my ear "It's got wine, you know." Several more minutes elapsed and she returned, this time whispering "Don't worry, it evaporates!" Alcohol does evaporate when cooked, losing its intoxicating properties, but leaving behind subtle flavor compounds and those healthful polyphenols.

PAPPARDELLE WITH RED WINE AND MEAT RAGU

- 1 lb. dried pappardelle or other long flat pasta
 - 2 T. extra virgin olive oil
 - 3 slices lean bacon, finely chopped
 - 2 stalks celery, diced
 - 1 carrot, peeled and diced
 - 1 medium onion, diced
 - 2 lbs. either lean ground beef or ground turkey (or a mixture of the two)
 - 1 cup white or crimini mushrooms, sliced
 - 2 cups dry red wine
 - 1 28 oz. can pureed tomatoes
 - 1 T. dried thyme or 3 healthy sprigs fresh
 - 1 tsp. oregano
 - 1 tsp. marjoram
 - Salt and pepper to taste
1. Heat the olive oil in a large saucepan or dutch oven. Add the bacon, celery, carrots and onions, cooking until the mixture is fragrant and softened, around five minutes. Add mushrooms and sauté for 2-3 more minutes. Add meat and cook until no pink remains. Drain off any excess fat.
 2. Add the red wine and boil over high heat until reduced by half, about 3 minutes. Add the tomato puree and spices. Simmer

over moderate heat, stirring occasionally, until thickened and flavorful.

3. Cook the pasta, drain and place in large serving bowl. Toss in the meat ragu. Serve with parmesan cheese.

CLAMS WITH OREGANO, GARLIC & WHITE WINE

- 4 lbs. fresh clams
- 1/3 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1/4 cup fresh Italian parsley, minced
- 1/4 cup minced fresh oregano (substitute fresh basil if no oregano is available)
- 1/2 cup dry white wine
- 6 ripe plum tomatoes, diced
- Dash black pepper

1. Preheat grill to medium hot (clams can also be cooked in a 425° oven).
2. Meanwhile, soak clams in a large bowl of cool water plus 2 T. salt for 30 minutes. Drain in a colander and rinse thoroughly.
3. Combine olive oil, garlic, parsley, oregano, wine, tomatoes and salt and pepper to taste.
4. Cut heavy-duty aluminum foil into four 12-inch squares. Place shiny side up on a work surface.
5. Put one quarter of the clams on one end of each sheet of aluminum foil, topped with one quarter of the sauce. Fold the free side of the foil over to enclose the mixture, pinching together the short sides of the packet first, then the long side. Seal the edges well!
6. Place the foil packets seam side up on the hot grill and cook for eight minutes or until the clams fully open. Provide bowls for each person and let them open the packets themselves. This dish tastes great with crusty bread or over linguine.

SIMPLE SANGRIA

- 2 bottles dry red wine
- 1 bottle lemon soda (I like the not-so-sweet Italian variety)
- Fruit in season, diced (stone fruits such as nectarines, apricots and peaches work well, so do oranges)
- 1 lemon, sliced
- Sugar to taste
- Mint sprigs

1. Combine ingredients, tasting and adding sugar as desired. Chill in refrigerator.
2. Serve, topping pitcher with mint sprigs.



Professor Produce

Could you write about the Nightshade family? I heard that nightshades are toxic, yet some people consume a lot of these (like tomatoes) so it seems like they must be safe.

August for me is a time of romantic excess—the lush and wavering heat, the close, humid air, the fireworks display of wildflowers alongside every road. There is a hint of the impending fall, as the natural course of things tilts our flourishing harvest into the slow, sure decline of decay. Nothing exemplifies this heady season of decadence better than that most romantic faction of the plant kingdom: the mysterious, controversial Nightshade family. Tomatoes, peppers, eggplants and potatoes comprise the familiar edible fruits of this family that you probably know and consume to some degree.

With a history worthy of a pulp fiction novel, Nightshades have been accused of everything over time from being outright deadly (and indeed, some varieties are) to causing leprosy, inducing insanity and being an over-stimulating aphrodisiac. Technically classified under the plant family “Solanaceae,” the origin of the term “Nightshade,” according to nutritional researcher, author, and Cornell University instructor, Norman F. Childers in his book *The Nightshades and Health*, is not clear. He explains that old English writings referred to these plants as Nightshades because of their “evil and loving” nature of the night. Certainly humans have always been suspicious of the nocturnal nature of certain organisms (see owl, wolf, spider, et al.). A plant which does its heartiest growing by cover of night might seem somewhat menacing, or at the least, divergent from our circadian rhythms.

Aside from that relatively benign prejudice, this family does have some potentially sinister relatives. Tobacco, Belladonna and Jimson Weed belong to the Nightshade family, and have been used for a variety of medicinal and shamanistic purposes over the course of time. Tobacco's toxic effects are well-known, but Belladonna, or “deadly nightshade,” is a familiar woodland plant that is extremely toxic and will cause violent reactions in the body if eaten, up to and including death. Jimson Weed, also called “Datura,” is a hallucinogenic flowering plant that has been used by shamans in indigenous cultures to induce visions, although it is extremely toxic and has killed many who have sought to use it recreationally. You should never consume any wild variety of Nightshade, even if it resembles their more edible cousins, as it will land you in the hospital or worse.

For that matter, you should never consume any green portion of an edible Nightshade either. Saturated with the toxin Solanine, green leafy parts of eggplants, peppers, potatoes and tomatoes have caused serious illness and even death when consumed in quantity. Likewise, avoid raw green tomatoes, potatoes that have been exposed to too much light (you can tell because they develop a green hue), and limit your intake of the unripe, green pepper. These will not kill you, but they can make your digestion quite unstable. Solanine also strip-mines your bones of calcium and can aggravate arthritic conditions in those prone to inflammation of this kind.

But I did say romantic, didn't I? Because for all these reasons and more, it is easy to see why the apprehension matches the allure of these beautiful, intense plants. Sometimes the best sensual experiences in life come imbued with a sense of risk, and although there is no risk in eating these fruits in moderation, they do grow from potentially poisonous stalks. To this end, what better symbolizes the passionate nature of late summer than the full-blown ripe heirloom tomato, exotically colored, musky, and heavy with sweet, tangy juice? Or how about the fecund swell of a deep purple eggplant, shiny as patent leather, full of meaty, rich flesh? Nightshades offer some of our finest seasonal food opportunities, and for the sake of all five senses, must be considered healthy foods.

Packed with actual nutrition (not just emotional sustenance), tomatoes and peppers are good sources of Vitamins A and C, have huge amounts of potassium and trace minerals and work to stimulate the detoxifying action of your liver. Likewise, potatoes are much better for you than you might think, provided you're not consuming them deep fried in fat. With high mineral content, including levels of potassium that are especially beneficial for those who consume too much salt, potatoes give a long lasting, slow-release of energy from complex carbohydrates. When eaten with their skins, they are also an excellent source of fiber. Eggplant has high levels of bioflavonoids, which help renew our arteries and prevent strokes. They are also soothing to the nervous system and have been linked to cancer prevention.

Beautiful and somewhat mysterious, domesticated Nightshades offer us a safe and luscious opportunity not to be missed. The romance of late summer arrives in her splayed out splendor and unapologetic radiance but once a year, so celebrate it in kind with the ripe, robust fruits she loves best. You just might start a love affair you won't want to quit.

FOUR ELEMENTS HERBALS: 20 Years in the Business of Organic Farming

Environmental issues are finally on the national stage, but there is a woman in Wisconsin who has been quietly living and working to promote organic, sustainable farming for two decades, long before organic was considered cool. Jane Hawley Stevens, founder and owner of Four Elements Herbals, a 130-acre organic farm and product producer in the pristine Baraboo Bluffs of central Wisconsin, celebrates 20 years this year of doing what she always thought was right — growing herbs, fruits and vegetables with a genuine respect for the earth.

What started out in 1987 as a pursuit of a dream to establish a family farm and continue a horticulture career turned into so much more for Hawley Stevens and her husband David Stevens. They started out small, supplying potted herbs to local stores and food co-ops in nearby Madison. Before long, the herbs became the focal point of the farm, from cooking and crafts to body care products and natural healing.

Today the farm, with its abundance of prairies and woodlands, is the setting for diverse and hand-selected species of herbs. Everything is hand-harvested at peak potency and blended in small batches. Local women are the loyal workforce.

Taking the step to be certified as an organic farm in 1990 was no small task, as master herbalist Hawley Stevens explains, but it was an important way to demonstrate to customers and retailers that her products are among the purest around. “We are certified by the Organic Crop Improvement Association and undergo an annual inspection,” said Hawley Stevens. “To qualify, farmers must practice organic growing techniques in areas such as soil fertility and pest control.”

Hawley Stevens didn’t stop there. All her products are packaged in recyclable containers using recycled packing materials. Oils used in the products are expeller pressed, an ancient Japanese method that does not use chemicals for extraction. Vitamin E oil is derived from the natural source — soybeans.

Product lines include: handmade soaps and bath salts; anointing perfumes and oils that correspond to the elements of fire, air, earth and water; lip balms; moisture creams; liniments and toners; and therapeutic salves. Four Elements Herbals products are available in the Wedge Health and Body Care Department. Look for featured items on sale in August!



FOOD BECOMES YOU

(Cont'd from page 8)

For some people, the risks of alcohol overshadow the benefits. Recovering alcoholics, indeed anyone with an addiction of any kind, should not drink. People with gout, pancreatic or liver disease should abstain. Diabetics must be careful of the sugar content of alcoholic beverages and individuals taking certain medications should be aware of possible negative interactions with alcohol.

Further, approximately one percent of the population, primarily asthmatics, are allergic to sulfites. Sulfites (sulfur dioxide) develop naturally at low levels during the process of fermentation. They are also added in by many wine makers during the fermentation stage to preserve a wine's character, flavor and color as well as to clean wine tanks. The FDA requires any wine with more than 10 ppm of sulfites (about what occurs naturally) to state “contains sulfites” on the label. Sweet white wines contain more sulfites than dry reds or whites.

Finally, while a lot of issues still remain to be addressed, one of the most significant benefits of “moderate drinking,” to me, is the psychosocial aspect. Alcohol's effect on physical markers of stress is unclear, but a drink

forces you to sit down, to chat, to relax. If a meal includes wine, you're more likely to linger. In most wine-drinking cultures, such as France, Italy and Spain, wine is always served with food. Despite the universality of alcohol consumption in these cultures, rates of alcohol abuse are extremely low. That's because they're enjoying alcohol in a time-tested, natural way, as something to be savored.



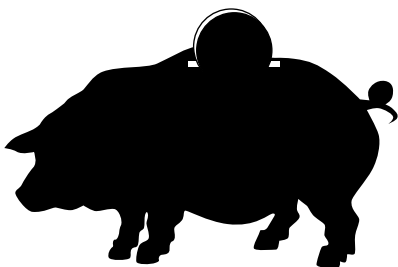
Wendy Gordon is a writer and restaurant reviewer who lives in Portland, Oregon. She has a Masters degree in Clinical Nutrition from the University of Chicago.

Piggy Banks

by Julie Frankovich, Business Development Representative,
City County Federal Credit Union

Do you ever wonder why people keep their money in a little swine shaped jar called a Piggy Bank? As I recently learned from the Savasaurus* newsletter, the origins trace back to Roman times when frugal citizens would store their coins in vessels made from an iron-rich substance called Pygg clay. Now, if that wasn't your first thought, you're not alone.

At City County Federal Credit Union, we offer the average person an alternative to piggy banks. Credit unions are member-owned financial cooperatives that are run, unlike commercial profit-driven banks, on a not-for-profit basis. Commercial banks



work to make the most profit for their stockholders. A large proportion of that profit comes from fees and penalties paid by the average bank customer, who is most likely not a stockholder, and the amount of these fees and penalties continues to rise at a staggering rate. By joining CCF, the average bank customer becomes one of the credit union's member-owners. At CCF, member-owners see better returns on savings and investments, lower interest rates on loans and fewer fees than at a commercial bank.

Visit www.ccfcu.org to discover more about the cooperative credit union advantage, or stop by one of our eight conveniently located neighborhood branch offices.

**CCF's children's club for members twelve years of age and under.*

LOCAL

Hoch Orchard LaCrescent, MN



Hoch Orchard is a small apple orchard and farm located just west of LaCrescent, MN. Owned and operated by Harry and Jackie Hoch

and family since 1997, they produce over 50 varieties of apples, ranging from old favorites like Macintosh and Firesides to new, very popular Honeycrisp, Zestar, Sweet 16, and Gingergold cultivars.

Harry Hoch is a pioneer of Integrated Pest Management (IPM), which is a system of monitoring pest-populations

to reduce the amount of chemicals needed to control pest and fungus issues that plague Minnesota grown apples. Cleaned and packed on their family farm, their apples are never treated with ripening agents, wax, shellac, or any post-harvest pesticides. Striving to bring you conscientiously produced fruit of the highest quality, Hoch Orchards fills a niche market providing locally grown apples all fall that are far superior to their conventionally grown counterparts.

Also producing cider, Alderman plums, berries, pumpkins, and fresh table and wine grapes, Hoch Orchards is a leader paving the way for more sustainable choices in local fruit agriculture.



CUSTOMER COMMENTS

Are Larry's eggs free-range?

All of the eggs we sell at the Wedge are free-range. Thank you.

Please note that "Back to Nature" brand is actually a division of Kraft Foods. I don't think it's organic or especially healthy- just "greenwashing" branding. It took me a while to figure that out (when they recently shrunk package size, but not price), but I count on the Wedge to filter some of these companies out. Please, local or genuinely organic substitutes.

We are aware of this. If we discontinued all corporate food from our shelves at this point in time, we would be unable to stay in business. However, we also support small and local businesses as much as we can, hence, Birchwood granola has a place on our shelves.

A customer wants us to know how much she appreciates the fact that we carry Cultural Revolution yogurt

Thanks for taking the time to comment on this wonderful new local yogurt line. To those still unfamiliar, the Cultural Revolution yogurts are well worth investigating!

Consider: Stop selling bottled water.

Unfortunately, there is such a high demand for this product that I don't see how this would be feasible.

Please use Veganaise in deli sandwiches/salads, etc. (or at least give the option).

Please consider ordering a sandwich at the deli counter. We don't offer Veganaise, but we do offer Nayonaise. According to their website, this mayo alternative is 100% vegan, a good source of protein, cholesterol-free, gluten-free, kosher and made without genetically modified ingredients!

Could you start carrying the field roast deli slices? They are really fantastic!

We have been expanding our grain meats section. Right now we are out of space for them. If space becomes available we will look in to bringing in more.

(Cont'd on page 14)

YOUTH FARM & MARKET PROJECT

Youth Farm & Market Project would like to thank the Wedge and its members for their continued support through the WedgeShare Program!

Please join us on **FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 28** at the Paul and Sheila Wellstone Center for Community Building on the West Side of St. Paul to celebrate the harvest of the season and our 13th year growing local produce. Join Chef Lucia Watson, along with Youth Farm participants and supporters, for an informal evening of food, wine, and great conversation.

Come any time between **5:30 – 8:00 p.m.** Youth-guided garden tours will be available throughout the evening.

\$25 suggested donation at the door.

Please visit our website www.youthfarm.net for more information and to view our new Youth Farm documentary.

The Wellstone Center is located at 179 E. Robie St. on the West Side of St. Paul.

For directions, please visit www.neighb.org or call 651.789.2500



LOCAL



Keewaydin Farms Viola, WI

Keewaydin Farms was founded in 1976 as a dairy operation by Richard and Mary Haucke. While they were not certified organic, they held strong beliefs in their roles as stewards of the land. Spraying was kept to a minimum and animals were given ample pasture to graze in the summer months. As people who had come from urban environments they envisioned a farm where they would raise their

children, and instill in them the sense of community and family offered from rural living. In 2002, after several years of travel and exploration, all three siblings; Jessica, Rufus and Jacob returned to the farm with hopes of carrying on the family trade. To this accord, they raise four acres of certified organic market garden produce, a small maple sugar shack, a 40-cow dairy, grass-fed poultry, and some pork.

DONATIONS

JOYCE FOOD SHELF

Food donated in April was 1043 pounds. In May, it amounted to 537 pounds. And in June, 656 pounds of food were donated. We truly appreciate your support. It is a great help.

Please remember that summer food shelf use goes up, as children are not getting school breakfasts and lunches. So keep those donations coming!

Sincerely,
Rose Roberts
Joyce Food Shelf



SABATHANI COMMUNITY CENTER

Dear Friends:

Thank you for your contribution of \$1100. Your donation has been designated to Family Resource Services for the food shelf. The board staff and families served are grateful for your support.

Again, thanks,
Ernest T. Johnson
Executive Director
Sabathani Community Center

CUSTOMER COMMENTS

(Cont'd from page 12)

Would you please carry the water buffalo yogurt the Seward carries?

Thanks for writing. We do carry it! Please ask customer service for help locating it.

Is it possible that you can do sampling in the appropriate areas (i.e. produce in produce, chips in aisle 5, etc.) as the "monster" Whole Foods and California co-ops do?

We've wanted to but we are so busy that it becomes too hard to maintain- both for stocking and cleanliness.

Could yogurt be sold in containers that can be recycled in Minneapolis?

Sadly, no, for the most part. We put up indicators pointing out the few that are #2 plastic that can be recycled. These include the Cultural Revolution line, Wildwood Soy yogurts and Sheep Milk yogurt.

Please carry the salted capers again. Pickled capers are just not the same (or as good).

Unfortunately, this product was discontinued by our supplier.

Please carry frozen pomegranate juice concentrate. Thanks.

Unfortunately, at this time I cannot find a vendor who carries this item. However, I'll look into it some more, sometimes distributors pick up new products.

Can you please make the vegan chocolate butterscotch pudding all the time?

We have literally dozens of bakery items set up for the Grab & Go case and only one shelf to put them on. So the sad fact is that we can't offer everyone's favorite deli dessert absolutely everyday. The good news is that this item is made quite often and we'd be happy to put some aside for you or let you know when it will be available in the case. Just give us a call!

Right now there is a dried papaya here that is more sugary (looks transparently) and there used to be a delicious no-sugar added one that I and many others just love! Where is it? Will it come back?

A customer had a concern that the bulk dried papaya has changed recently — it appears translucent and slightly "gummy" — is gelatin or something else added to the papaya?

The papaya is sourced from two different vendors as neither is able to supply more than 50% of the demand. Each source uses a slightly different process which is why the appearance is different.

Please have a selection of rice pasta in your deli selections. I'm wheat sensitive and it would be nice having an occasional cooked rice pasta.

(Cont'd on page 16)

LOCAL



Rock Spring Farm Spring Grove, MN

Rock Spring Farm is a family-owned farm raising organic vegetables and livestock on 80-acres south of Spring Grove, Minnesota. The farm has a rich diversity of landscapes including fertile bottomlands, forest, pastures, and a clear running stream. 9,000 sq. ft. of greenhouse space provide for year-round production of salad greens and fine herbs. The greenhouses also are used seasonally for tomatoes, cucumbers, and other vegetable crops.

Rock Spring's owners Chris and Kim

Blanchard met while studying horticulture at the University of Wisconsin: their wedding bands were made in the image of silver garlic braids. They purchased their farm in 1999 and became certified organic in 2002. With a love of the land, years of experience, and their three children, they currently produce some of the highest-quality organic produce available on the market today. The Blanchard's sell their products through a CSA, various wholesalers, and at the Rochester farmer's market.

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CUSTOMER COMMENTS

(Cont'd from page 14)

Thank you for your request. While we are definitely working on providing more wheat-free and gluten-free deli items, we're not quite ready to offer rice pasta as an option. I will let the recipe development team know that some customers would like this option. In the meantime, please consider asking a counter person to point out some wheat-free deli options.

Vegan DHA? Omega-Zen 3 is a brand I like.

We now stock a DHA/Flax liquid blend that is vegan. You will find it in our cooler. Thanks for the suggestion of the brand Omega-Zen 3. I have emailed them requesting more information. We have been on the lookout for vegan DHA.

Kinnikinnick sandwich bread, gluten-free. It's their most popular-selling bread. Would love to get it here rather than mail order.

Due to a number of requests we have picked one up. You will find it in the frozen bread section of the freezer.

The world would be a better place if customers followed the directional arrows in the Wedge parking lot. Parking is stressful sometimes — like Sunday afternoon.

Yes, parking can be tight here on the weekends. Our suggestions: We are less busy earlier in the day and week nights before the sun goes down. We also have a

small lot on the south side on the building that tends to be less busy. We also have over 50 slots available for folks who can bike instead of drive and you can also park on the street. We have lot attendants both Saturday and Sunday to help with congestion and encourage folks to "make the world a better place" by following the arrows!

Wilbur buds, wilbur buds, wilbur buds! They are back. Please stock them!

I spoke to the folks at Seward who did have this product back, but only for a while. It seems the brand has been bought by Cargill. At this point in time, we would have to go direct for this product and we are unable to do so due to minimum order requirements and limited storage space.

Please consider Keto Bars. They are high protein, low sugar. Thank you.

Unfortunately, this product is not available through our distributors.

When are you expecting bulk lima beans back in? Sadly, they've been out the last two times I've been in.

Hope we're still ordering LIMA BEANS! (Organic, i.e.) Thanks.

Unfortunately, we have not been able to get lima beans for quite some time. For now, the bin formerly known as lima beans will house the pinto bean's colorful cousin, the anasazi bean.

Let's carry Tropical Source Rice Crisp and Toasted Almond, varieties of chocolate bars. They are the true vegan bars. They are my favorite. I have gone ahead and special ordered them for now, but would appreciate having them back on the shelf.

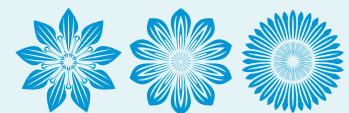
I am so sorry — we'll see what we can do, but we did discontinue these bars due to faltering sales and to make room for new product.

Please restock the herb roasted cashews! My family loved them and they were a bulk organic roasted nut — formerly unheard of!

Sadly, even though I thought they were great, most people must not have. They sold very slowly and we had to stop carrying them.

Would you please look into getting Malden sea salt crystals? Whole Foods no longer carries it, nor does Lunds. It's absolutely fab — perfect for sauté, etc.

Sorry, but none of our current distributors carry this product. Please check out La Baleine coarse salt or the Celtic coarse sea salt in aisle 3.



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